Mont Rose College of Management & Sciences

UKPRN: 1002377

The Teaching Excellence Framework for Higher Education

Year Four Provider Submission

January 2019

Introduction

Mont Rose College opened in 2006 and in 2015 became a partner of Buckinghamshire New University. The College's Vision and Mission is to be an exceptional college, with the students at the centre and to deliver excellence in all aspects of our work. The significant investment in physical, financial, intellectual, human and social capital is contributing to an excellent teaching provision and the students' satisfaction.

The College has expanded and gained an excellent reputation within the local community. It became a popular choice for students wishing to study HE programmes. In the last twelve years, the College's Board of Governors and Senior Management Team have been continually developing new strategies to support the quality of higher education provision, financial stability and student protection, exceptionally high quality customer services and excellent facilities.

Mont Rose College has recently acquired a seven floor building at Gants Hill, Ilford. The acquisition allows us to implement new plans which would further enhance quality and student satisfaction. We will be setting up serviced offices for students to support a smooth business start and will provide space for various clubs which could be run after classes. We will open a larger department for employability, and provide larger libraries, IT labs, cafeterias and other services.

The core of the College's five year Strategic Plan is to continually engage in the development of high standard and innovative teaching across all subject areas and provide an exceptional learning experience for our students. The College ensures that all legal and regulatory

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requirements are met by the College's relevant policies and procedures and by the robust internal control systems (IC). It help to ensure that the effectiveness of internal processes is outstanding. IC applies to all areas of the College, including academic, admissions, student services, financial, data collection, registry and security. The Internal Audit Committee (IAC), which is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of internal controls and compliance with the statutory and regulatory requirements reviews the processes and provides recommendations for improvements to the Board of Governors.

Looking forward, the College is planning to apply for New Teaching Degree Awarding Powers (NTDAP) this year, which will open new opportunities and progression routes to the staff and students.

Outstanding Teaching, Learning and Assessment and Student Outcomes

The QAA has concluded in October 2018 that Mont Rose College of Management and Sciences (MRC) is making commendable progress with continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision since the last review in October 2017.

Our students have provided a very good feedback in the most recent NSS survey 'Teaching on my Course', which was 6 points higher than the benchmark. MRC is continuously working on enhancing academic standards and teaching quality. A special emphasis is placed on staff development, sharing of best practices among the teaching staff, developing students' academic skills and subject knowledge and assistance for student's to gain the required skills for employment.

Mont Rose College operates a robust quarterly internal progress review to ensure high quality teaching, learning and assessment. The recruitment, retention and achievement data, external examiner reports, internal verifier reports, student and staff feedbacks and employer engagement data are reviewed.

The Programme Leads compile their quarterly student feedback and class observation reports which they present in the Academic/ Quality Assurance Board meetings for review and assessment and also share with all teaching staff. Annual Monitoring Reports are developed by the Programme Leads for each cohort which are reviewed and assessed in the Academic/ Quality Assurance Board meetings.

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The College has adopted a holistic approach to support a culture of continuous improvement in the sharing of best practice across teaching teams. The sharing of best practices document was created in 2016-2017 and is available for teacher's to access on Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Every teacher completes the document quarterly and a summary report is compiled and distributed among all teaching staff.

The College's Staff Mentoring Policy' instructs mentors to be assigned for every new staff member and regular monitoring, class observations, discussions and progress assessments are carried out to ensure that quality is kept at a high standard at all times. The College requires teachers and other staff to participate in continuous professional development to ensure the enhancement of teaching quality and student support. The College provides funding for staff development programmes. Also, the College offers a sponsored level 3 course of Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement to all teaching staff members as part of their continuous professional development.

Students are involved in developing new mechanisms to improve the teaching and learning experience. One example is that students are participating in teacher class observations and new teaching staff recruitment interviews, providing their feedback and assisting in selecting quality teachers. The College teaching staff provides formative and summative feedback promptly within set time scales to ensure that students are fully informed and satisfied. The College is ensuring that by following good discipline and sincere commitment, the students can collect all benefits and achieve their full learning potential. Therefore, it is expected that all student coursework will be received by the set deadlines and student attendance will be above 80%. The students provided a very good feedback regarding 'Assessment and Feedback' in the most recent NSS survey at 5.5 points higher than the benchmark.

To support the students in achieving requirements, the College ensures that tutorial help is freely available on a one to one basis throughout the length of the course. The classes are separated into smaller groups for group presentations and assessments, peer observations, classroom quizzes, classroom-based summative assessments or when extra support is required for more complex subjects. The students provided a very good feedback regarding 'Academic Support' in the most recent NSS survey at 7.2 points higher than the benchmark.

The College is running two week 'Academic Skills' sessions free of charge to freshly enrolled students before the start of each session in order to assist them in a smooth commencement of their programme. The sessions help the students to equip themselves with academic writing

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skills and the use of Harvard referencing, computer skills and provide a deeper insight into the College's culture and requirements.

Research

The College has developed its own Research Centre in October, 2018. The MRC Research Centre will be developing research projects in collaboration with the Buckinghamshire New University that will support staff development, engagement and analytical skills. The MRC Research Centre will initially be managed by the Academic Department and gradually developed into an independent body.

The Ethics Committee has been established this year from the initial research group of 12 academic staff members from different subject areas. At the moment the College's established research group has developed a "Research Framework" and defined primary and secondary research areas. The College shared the preferred research areas with the Buckinghamshire New University and is currently working waiting for their response.

A prime reason for starting a MRC Research Centre is to find and implement courageous and innovative ideas and enhance research and analytical skills among teaching staff and students.

The College is a member of the Council for Hospitality Management Education (CHME) which presented an opportunity for one of Mont Rose College's HND in Hospitality students to present a paper at their Annual Research Conference in May 2018.The membership opened the doors to many other benefits, like access for our staff and students to a valuable network of UK and international academics and practitioners, opportunities to be involved in research and sharing best practices and achievements.

The College maintains the Journal of Academic Reviews where students' participation is highly encouraged. The Journal of Academic Reviews has its ISSN number and is published in printed and online versions. At the moment the College is applying for an Emerald (Scopus) membership which is the largest abstract and citation database of peer reviewed literature. The College has fulfilled all required criteria and is expecting an acceptance in March 2019.

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The Students' Voice

The Students' Voice is embedded into the College's settings and activities to strengthen the teacher and student partnerships, sense of community and involvement in progressing and enhancing teaching and learning strategies.

The students are encouraged to collaborate with the staff to enhance the educational experience through participation in committee meetings, research projects and contributing to the Journal of Academic Reviews.

Students are members of the Class Representatives Committee, Board of Governors, Academic/ Quality Assurance Board, Human Resource and Welfare Committee and Programme Committees for BA, BSc/ Top-up, HND– Health & Social Care, DET, HND – Marketing & Hospitality.

The College staff has regular meetings with the student representatives to discuss different ideas and plans, extra curriculum activities which help to enrich and enliven the students' learning experience.

Also, the students are provided a budget every year to organise the Christmas event, where they are able to demonstrate their organisational, planning and creative skills. The students are invited to volunteer and participate in various other organised events which also help to enhance their communication, customer service and presentation skills.

This year the Business students participated in the College's arranged marketing events. Together with the staff they visited schools, spoke to younger children about our College and contributed to the College's arranged "Ilford Exchange" and "Flash Mob" marketing events. The Hospitality students visited restaurants and hotels, where they were able to exchange ideas with the local managers. Many students found these experiences extremely beneficial, especially in the development of their own businesses.

Many students are involved in the management of the Annual Graduation Ceremony, where they receive certificates for outstanding contributions.

The College follows the Student Engagement Policy to ensure that students contribute and have their say in the College's processes.

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Welfare, Pastoral Support and Assurance of Excellent Outcome to All Students

The College has its doors open for all students who require welfare assistance or pastoral support. Currently, three Welfare Officers are available to help students with special needs and to provide pastoral support. Students with special needs are assigned individual Mentors to ensure that the excellent student outcomes can be achieved for all students.

The Mentors assigned maintain a diary of meetings for each student. All required help is identified and implemented according to the needs assessment. The mentoring programmes are monitored by the Academic/ Quality Assurance Board to ensure that the needs have been met.

The College takes special care aimed at individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds/ with protected characteristics (as defined by the Equality Act 2010). The Welfare Officers, Student Mentors and Student Services are assigned to identify students at risk and provide extra support.

As part of our strategy to help the students from disadvantaged backgrounds, we arrange motivational programmes by inviting guest speakers from the relevant industries. The Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London, Sir Kenneth Olisa OBE was invited in our most recent Graduation Ceremony 2018 to address our students, who delivered an exceptional and unforgettable speech.

Widening participation is part of the Strategic Plan of MRC. It is preserved in its founding ethos and strategic plan, because the College already has a much diversified participation profile with regard to male/ female ratio, age profile, ethnic diversity, residence, employment profile and employment history.

The College class schedules are arranged to provide flexibility to the students. The College arranges the programme timetables in line with the school term dates to ensure that students who are also parents can access education while their children are at school and spend the holidays/ half terms together with them.

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According to the most recent HESA AP data return, the Mont Rose College student's continuation rate is 6.9 points higher than the benchmark.

Employability and Innovation

The College makes every effort to make sure that students receive all information relevant to their courses and opportunities available to enhance their employability, knowledge and skills. All this contributes to the exceptionally high student satisfaction which was reported in our last few years' National Student Surveys (NSS). Following the most recent NSS report, the students have provided their supportive feedback (Appendix 1).

The more detailed analysis and review of NSS results was discussed in the relevant meetings where improvements and solutions were suggested jointly by students and academics. Subsequently the decisions taken at such meetings are reflected in the College's long and short term plans. Following one such meeting, the College identified a need to help the students studying the Health and Social Care to find suitable work placements. A staff member was employed who is fully involved in communication with local employers who would be able to take the students for the work experience. A volunteer coordinator from Barts Health NHS Trust has visited the College and gave presentation to Heath and Social Care students regarding work placements with them.

Also, the College established an internal employability department developing employability strategies, contacting local employers, organising career events, inviting in recruitment agencies and organising National Career Service workshops. The College also developed an online employability platform which is helpful for the students to find newly available job opportunities in their respective areas, developing CV, finding tips for job interviews etc. The College has links with the local council, the Redbridge Chamber of Commerce, London Chamber of Commerce and local businesses which provide the students with the opportunity to participate in community events, gaining valuable experience and facilitating work placements.

The College and Buckinghamshire New University are working together to improve the involvement of employers and industry specialists.

During the last year the College has been making great effort to help students to progress into highly skilled employment by offering participating in skill development exercises and projects

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and helping the students to get into employment. We believe that our efforts are slowly returning benefits as more and more students reported getting higher skilled jobs. Every year we refer to the metrics data which provides more insight into areas which return varying results for the students split according to their ethnicity or gender. Last year we learned that a significantly higher percentage of women go into a higher skilled employment compared to men. We put lots of emphasis on this fact and introduced special work sessions supporting male students in improving their presentation skills. We learned that the percentage of highly skilled employment for male students is increasing. We will continue to organise more such training events to reduce the gap.

We recognise that different ethnic, age or gender groups face different challenges. Based on this we arrange separate sessions which are directed to specific groups. For example, the IT classes are arranged for mature students who require extra support and work ethics and official dressing classes are arranged separately for men and women. This is to enhance students' self-esteem and confidence before their job interviews.

Mont Rose College is continually looking for innovative ideas that would enhance the student's educational experience. In the last academic year the College involved industry experts who were mentoring the students in developing business plans. A prime goal of this programme named "MRC Angels Dream Big" was to enhance students' employability skills. Therefore, the staff put in great effort to encourage as many students as possible to participate. The competition saw students develop a business idea over a nine month period to encourage them to learn about starting a new business. The contestants presented their business plans in front of a panel of judges, which was formed of business leaders and government officials. The winner of the programme was announced in July 2018 and received a £500 cash prize and access to a serviced office. [https://mrcollege.ac.uk/business-plan-competition/] [https://www.ilfordrecorder.co.uk/news/mont-rose-college-dragons-den-1-5606078]

The College's academic and IT departments continue to work on the development of the effective mechanisms that would assist students in excelling in employability skills. The online Employability Platform, which was launched last year has been improved this year and provides more skill learning and assessing features, direction to job opportunities, preparation for job interviews and improving CV's. It is available on the VLE for students' and staff easy access.

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The 'MRC Student' digital application has been developed this year and made available for students and staff to download online. The application provides faster access to the College's news, course information, and Moodle (VLE). The students found the new app very beneficial and time saving.

The newly opened College campus at Gants Hill, Ilford will provide more space for developing other innovative ideas. The College wants to help the students to start their business by removing some initial business start-up barriers like administration and business start-up advice costs. The College will provide serviced offices for outstanding students to help them to begin their business venture within the next 6-12 months, and will include facilities like the internet, a phone line, an office and a workstation.

Conclusion

The core metrics of TEF Year 4 present solid evidence of our strong performance in all key areas. The 91% students express their overall satisfaction with the services provided by the Mont Rose College and internally generated data confirms that majority recommend the College to their friends.

Our students are exceptionally happy with the course provision and academic support, they praise staff for being available when they need to.

In summary, Mont Rose College of Management and Sciences has a history of delivering exceptional quality teaching for students mainly from disadvantaged (BME) backgrounds. As an educational institution, we do everything that is in our power to motivate, encourage and shape people's lives for the better. Over the years we have worked with so many people and helped them to achieve what they believed was not achievable and succeed beyond their expectations! Though this is an achievement in itself, there is still a long way to go!

Approved By: Board of Governors **Date: 11/01/2019**
Department: Academic/Finance **Date: 07//01/2019**

If you have any queries about this document, please kindly contact the Academic/ Finance Departments at s.zain@mrcollege.ac.uk

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Appendix 1

Students' feedback regarding the services offered by Mont Rose College (MRC) –

Summary written by the Students Union Representatives

Being one of the Alternative Higher Education providers, MRC's offer is relatively wide, and includes HND courses in Business Marketing, Hospitality, Health and Social Care, as well as a level 5 Diploma in Education and Training course. On top of them, the college, working in co-operation with Bucks New University, enables students to pursue their education even further and obtain BA and MBA degrees. This has been highly praised by the students, who not only manage to receive an HND level qualifications, but they are able to stay and follow their education path without having to leave the familiar environment of the college.

Teaching on my course

Speaking on behalf of most of the students, it can be said that the quality of teaching provided is on an outstanding level. The tutors' knowledge, passion and teaching skills have been passed on us to the extent that "not succeeding makes me feel guilty" – as one of the students has pointed out.

The classes are conducted in an interesting way, with plenty of hands-on practice (especially in Hospitality courses), real life references and examples, which will definitely help us find our way, while pursuing a career. Lots of group practice helps us learn team-work skills. Obligatory presentations assessment make us build confidence in public speaking.

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Assessment and feedback

There have been no complaints mentioned in regards to unfair assessment of the work we do. All the final submissions are preceded by a chance for constructive feedback during the formative submission and additional tutorial hours, when individual discussions and catch up on the missing / not fully understood problems are available. It is important to note, that all the tutors seem to be eager to spend whatever time is needed to help, direct and ensure that we will all succeed in passing, as long as we make some effort and incorporate the guidelines into our work.

Academic support

Notwithstanding the general support provided by the tutors, who make sure that we are all directed towards additional study materials and assessment requirements that MRC help to make us succeed can be proven by the following:

- *Library resources, are constantly updated, not only with books, but also on-line access*
- *IT support is available on request, both in the form of trainings and immediate solutions*
- *Academic Skills support, in the form of a two-week training for the newly enrolled students, as well as those who need on the spot advice, proofreading and presentation practice are provided.*
- *Moodle is constantly updated in terms of class materials, information and guidance.*

Employment after study

Although some of us have already experienced working in the fields of Hospitality, Business or Social Care and have undertaken the course as a trampoline to the managerial career, for many starting an HND programme it is entering a new territory. Nevertheless, informal research among the alumni proves, that the

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diplomas and degrees obtained at MRC have definitely helped in climbing up a career ladder, as well as finding a new better paid job.

The MRC Employability Department tries to equip us with more and more skills by organising workshops (e.g. National Career Service), meetings with employment agencies, inviting guest speakers and helping organise work placement.

Tutors' involvement in projects like Business Plan Competitions and advisory meetings with successful, well-known entrepreneurs definitely help those of us who are planning to set-up their own business, regardless of the industry.

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